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STATE FOR NEA/ARP, EEB/CIP/BA (TFINTON)  
STATE PASS USTR FOR JBUNTIN/CHINCKLEY

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [ECPS](#) [ETRD](#) [USTR](#) [MU](#)  
SUBJECT: OMAN RESPONSE TO SECTION 1377 TELECOM TRADE  
AGREEMENT REQUEST

REF: STATE 3689

¶1. In response to reftel request, Oman's Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) has proclaimed itself to be "technology neutral" with regard to permitting Voice over Internet Protocol (VOIP) services in Oman, so long as carriers are licensed to offer them and they can be legally intercepted. Since the TRA views VOIP as a voice service, as opposed to a data service, only Class 1 license holders are eligible to offer VOIP in Oman. The TRA has indicated that Omantel is the only company in Oman that currently is licensed to offer such services, but chooses not to do so. (Note: A copy of Omantel's license is posted on the TRA's website. End Note). Omantel is the only licensed internet service provider in Oman, and blocks access to VOIP sites. In addition, the TRA has issued two stern warnings to cybercafe owners that the use of VOIP services by clients is prohibited.

¶2. The TRA is currently working with a consultant on reforming its fixed-line infrastructure regulations with a view toward issuing FTA-compliant telecommunications licensing regulations. These regulations would complement its recently promulgated Telecommunications Act. Once the TRA has received the consultant's recommendations, and has prepared responses to a series of questions received from USTR on January 5, it will contact the Embassy to arrange for a DVC to discuss the outstanding issues.

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